

**Political Science 125D**  
**Corruption in Developing Countries**  
**UC San Diego, Winter 2021**

Professor Simeon Nichter (nichter@ucsd.edu)

Office Hours: Friday, 1:30 – 3:30 PM (and by appointment), held exclusively on Zoom.

Sign up and access Zoom link here: <https://bit.ly/2Tn91FE>

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**COURSE SUMMARY**

This course explores corruption in developing countries across the world. First, we will examine various types of corruption, ranging from bribery to financial kickbacks. Second, we will investigate examples of such corruption in numerous domains including elections, natural resources, development projects, and international business. Third, we will explore causes and consequences of corruption, with an emphasis on political and economic factors. Finally, we will assess successes and failures of numerous actions undertaken by domestic and international actors to reduce corruption in developing countries. The course draws on work from political science, economics, and anthropology, and provides many examples of corruption from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course runs for ten weeks during Winter 2021, starting Tuesday, January 5. The digital platform for this course is [canvas.ucsd.edu](https://canvas.ucsd.edu). The course requirements are as follows:

1. WATCH two lectures each week. A video recording of each lecture, as well as a PDF of its accompanying slides, will be uploaded to Canvas by each lecture date listed in the Course Overview below. Each lecture should be watched in its entirety at a convenient time the same week it is posted.
2. READ assigned material for each lecture before watching it. All readings are listed below, and can be downloaded from the Files tab on Canvas.
3. DISCUSS course content in the online Weekly Discussion. For each week, a discussion question will be posted in the Discussion tab on Canvas. You must participate every week by writing a post in Canvas. You have two options for your post: (a) respond directly to the current week's question, or (b) respond to another student who already wrote about the current week's question. You are also required to click the "Like" button on two other students' posts for the current week – one that you strongly agree with, and one that you strongly disagree with. ("Likes" are anonymous, so nobody will know which you clicked, or why.) Each week's deadline is Saturday at 5 pm (e.g., Week 2's deadline is 5 pm on January 16). You will receive 100% credit for each post, as long as your post is on-time, on the appropriate topic, courteous to others, doesn't copy another student's response, and is at least 100 words long. You may miss one assigned Weekly Discussion without penalty. There is no Weekly Discussion due for Weeks 1, 5, or 10 – that is, you will not post anything for January 9, February 6, or March 13.
4. TAKE the online midterm (open book/open note) on February 4 during the regularly scheduled class time (2:00-3:20 pm). If you have an important reason why you need to take the exam at an alternate time (e.g., you are in a different time zone), you must email me by February 1 for consideration of your scheduling request.

5. TAKE the online final exam (open book/open note) on March 18 during the regularly scheduled final exam time (3-6 pm). If you have an important reason why you need to take the exam at an alternate time (e.g., you are in a different time zone), you must email me by March 12 for consideration of your scheduling request.

Students are expected to complete all required readings prior to each lecture and to listen to all lectures. Neither the readings nor the lecture slides will provide comprehensive coverage of the materials you are expected to know for the exams.

There will be a midterm exam and a cumulative final exam. Grading will be determined as follows:

35% Online Midterm Examination (February 4, 2:00-3:20 PM)  
50% Online Final Examination (March 18, 3-6 PM)  
15% Participation in Online Weekly Discussion

The online midterm and final exam will be open book/open note. In other words, you may use any books, articles, notes, class lectures or internet sites during the exams. However, you may not communicate with anyone from class.

The failure to attend the scheduled exam sessions will result in 0 points (an F) for the given assignment. All students must take exams at the scheduled time, unless otherwise arranged with the instructor or through the Office for Students with Disabilities.

*Please ignore the gradebook in Canvas, as well as any percentages on exams reported by Canvas. Canvas is not used in this course for calculating grades. For a faster response when contacting me, please do not use the Canvas system; instead, email directly: [nichter@ucsd.edu](mailto:nichter@ucsd.edu).*

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action consistent with University rules and regulations. A non-exhaustive list of behaviors that violate standards of academic integrity includes: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, obtaining an unfair advantage, aiding and abetting dishonesty, falsification of records and official documents, and unauthorized access to computerized academic or administrative records or systems. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with University regulations regarding plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Information about UCSD's academic integrity policies can be found at <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/>.

You are strongly encouraged to take issues of academic integrity seriously. Violations can end up on your academic record and may become a red flag for employers and graduate schools. Note that even unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism. If you are unsure about whether to cite or how to cite a source, then confer with the professor or teaching assistant.

## **ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

All necessary accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (<https://osd.ucsd.edu/>). Students are required to discuss accommodation arrangements with instructors and OSD liaisons in the department well in advance of any exams or assignments. The OSD Liaison for the Department of Political Science is Joanna Peralta; please connect with her via the Virtual Advising Center as soon as possible.

## **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

During office hours, I am happy to answer questions about this course or provide general career guidance. Students who have questions pertaining to Political Science academic advising are asked to reach out the Department's Undergraduate Advisor, Natalie Ikker, who can be reached via the Virtual Advising Center. Academic advising questions often include (but not limited to): add/drop deadlines, course enrollment policies, planning major and minor requirements, quarter-by-quarter plans, department petitions and paperwork, and referrals to campus and student support services.

## **INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM STATEMENT**

The TA and I are fully committed to creating a learning environment that supports diversity of thought, perspectives, experiences, and identities. We urge each of you to contribute your unique perspectives to discussions of course questions, themes, and materials so that we can learn from them, and from each other. If you should ever feel excluded, or unable to fully participate in class for any reason, please let me know during office hours, by email, or through any anonymous manner.

## **BASIC NEEDS RESOURCES**

**Basic Needs:** Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their academic performance, is encouraged to contact: [foodpantry@ucsd.edu](mailto:foodpantry@ucsd.edu), [basicneeds@ucsd.edu](mailto:basicneeds@ucsd.edu), or call 858-246-2632.

**Triton Food Pantry** is an emergency food relief program to provide food for students and fight food insecurity. You can get canned food, pasta, beans, and rice as well as fruit and vegetables at the pantry. [foodpantry@ucsd.edu](mailto:foodpantry@ucsd.edu)

**The Hub Basic Needs Center** coordinates basic needs resources vital to thrive as a student, which includes access to nutritious food, stable housing, and financial wellness resources. We provide basic needs services and resource referrals to registered UC San Diego students. Ask about **CalFresh** food benefits: [basicneeds.ucsd.edu](https://basicneeds.ucsd.edu) or call 858-246-2632.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

There are *no required books* for this course. Please see UCSD's TED system for information about electronic versions of class readings. While no book purchases are mandatory, I encourage those of you with a strong interest in corruption to consider purchasing your own copy of the following books, from which we will be reading excerpts:

- Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences and Reform* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- Arnold Heidenheimer and Michael Johnston, eds., *Political Corruption: Concepts and Contexts*, Third Edition (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2001)

## **COURSE OVERVIEW AND READINGS**

### **Lecture 1: Introduction**

*Tuesday, January 5*

#### **I. WHAT IS CORRUPTION?**

### **Lecture 2: Defining and Measuring Corruption**

*Thursday, January 7*

- "Is Transparency International's Measure of Corruption Still Valid?," *The Guardian*, December 3, 2013.
- John Gardiner, "Defining Corruption," in Arnold Heidenheimer and Michael Johnston, eds., *Political Corruption: Concepts and Contexts*, Third Edition (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2001)
- Daniel Treisman, "What Have We Learned About the Causes of Corruption from Ten Years of Cross-National Empirical Research?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 10 (2007).
  - Read pages 211-221.

### **Lecture 3: Petty Corruption (1)**

*Tuesday, January 12*

- "Bribery Serves as Life-Support for Chinese Hospitals," *Reuters*, July 23, 2013.
- Akhil Gupta, "Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State," *American Ethnologist*, 22, 2 (1995).
  - Read pages 375, 378-385.
- "Corruption in Serbia: Bribery as Experienced by the Population," United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2011).
  - Read pages 3-5, 17-28.

### **Lecture 4: Petty Corruption (2)**

*Thursday, January 14*

- "Crooked Police Go Hi-Tech in Hunt for Bribes in Kenya," *Balancing Act*.
- Sandra Sequeira and Simeon Djankov, "Corruption and Firm Behavior." The London School of Economics and Political Science (2013).
  - Read pages 1-5, 8-11, 16-17, 33-35

- Kirsten Endres, “Making Law: Small-Scale Trade and Corrupt Exceptions at the Vietnam–China Border,” *American Anthropologist*, 116, 3 (2014).
  - Read pages 611-622

### **Lecture 5: Grand Corruption**

*Tuesday, January 19*

- Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences and Reform* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
  - Read Chapter 3
- Raymond Fisman and Edward Miguel, *Economic Gangsters: Corruption, Violence, and the Poverty of Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008)
  - Read pages 22-43
- Daniel Kaufmann and Paul Siegelbaum, “Privatization and Corruption in Transition Economies,” *Journal of International Affairs* 50, 2 (1996).
  - Read pages 419-439

### **Lecture 6: Grand Corruption: Case Study of Brazil**

*Thursday, January 21*

- Coming Up at the Car Wash: Brazil’s Biggest Anti-Corruption Investigation is at a Turning Point, *Economist*, April 11, 2019.
- Transparency International. “Brazil: Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption” (2019).
- Moro, Sérgio Fernando. “Preventing Systemic Corruption in Brazil.” *Daedalus* 147:3 (2018).

## **II. SPHERES OF CORRUPTION**

### **Lecture 7: Natural Resources and Corruption**

*Tuesday, January 26*

- “A Hidden Cost of Corruption: Environmental Devastation,” *Washington Post*, June 16, 2017.
- Farouk Al-Kasim et al., “Grand Corruption in the Regulation of Oil,” U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (2008).
  - Read pages 7-11, 15-26
- Joseph Kofi Teye, “Corruption and Illegal Logging in Ghana,” *International Development Planning Review*, 35, 1 (2013).

### **Lecture 8: International Business and Corruption**

*Thursday, January 28*

- “Bribes and Backdoor Deals Help Foreign Firms Sell to China’s Hospitals. *New York Times*, June 14, 2019.
- “Wal-mart Hushed Up a Vast Mexican Bribery Case,” *New York Times*, April 21, 2012.
- Susan Rose-Ackerman and Yingqi Tan, “Corruption in the Procurement of Pharmaceuticals and Medical Equipment in China: The Incentives Facing Multinationals, Domestic Firms and Hospital Officials,” Yale Law & Economics Research Paper No. 498 (2014).

- Read pages 2-4, 28-38

## **Lecture 9: Organized Crime and Corruption**

*Tuesday, February 2*

- Susan Rose-Ackerman and Bonnie Palifka. “Corruption, Organized Crime and Money Laundering.” In *Institutions, Governance and the Control of Corruption*, edited by Kaushik Basu and Tito Cordell (International Economic Association Series, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
- Stephen Handelman, “The Russian ‘Mafiya,’” *Foreign Affairs* 73, 2 (1994).
- Peng Wang, “The Rise of the Red Mafia in China: A Case Study of Organised Crime and Corruption in Chongqing,” *Trends in Organized Crime* 16 (2013).

## **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4: MIDTERM EXAMINATION (IN-CLASS)**

### **Lecture 10: Clientelism and Corruption (1)**

*Tuesday, February 9*

- “Nigerian Crusader Faces Corruption Paradox,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 20, 2015.
- Susan Stokes et al. , *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
  - Read pages 3-23
- Frederic Charles Schaffer (ed.), *Elections for Sale: The Causes and Consequences of Vote Buying* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007).
  - Read pages 1-11

### **Lecture 11: Clientelism and Corruption (2)**

*Thursday, February 11*

- “India's Election Problem - Votes for Sale,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 9, 2014.
- Javier Auyero, “The Logic of Clientelism in Argentina: An Ethnographic Account,” *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (2000)
  - Read pages 55-57, 61-75
- Simeon Nichter, “Political Clientelism and Social Policy in Brazil,” in Diego Abente Brun and Larry Diamond, eds., *Clientelism, Social Policy and the Quality of Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014)
  - Read pages 131-132, 137-148

### **Lecture 12: Foreign Aid, Development Projects, and Corruption**

*Tuesday, February 16*

- “Consumed by Corruption: The Afghanistan Papers.” *Washington Post*, December 9, 2019.
- Jean Ensminger, “Inside Corruption Networks: Following the Money in Community Driven Development,” Working Paper (2012).
  - Read pages 1-2, 9-22, 26-35
- Daniel Jordan Smith, “Corruption, NGOs, and Development in Nigeria,” *Third World Quarterly* 31, 2 (2010).
  - Read pages 234-244, 248-256

## **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF CORRUPTION**

### **Lecture 13: Culture and Corruption**

*Thursday, February 18*

- “In Crackdown on Corruption, Even Mooncakes Not Exempt,” *International New York Times*, September 5, 2014.
- Raymond Fisman and Edward Miguel, *Economic Gangsters: Corruption, Violence, and the Poverty of Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).
  - Chapter 4
- Seymour Martin Lipset and Gabriel Salman Lenz, “Corruption, Culture and Markets,” in Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington, eds., *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000).

### **Lecture 14: Economics and Corruption**

*Tuesday, February 23*

- “Corruption and the Economy: Is Anti-Graft Anti-Growth?,” *Economist*, August 2, 2014.
- Samuel P. Huntington, “Modernization and Corruption” (1968), reprinted in Arnold Heidenheimer and Michael Johnston, eds., *Political Corruption: Concepts and Contexts*, Third Edition (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2001).
- Daniel Kaufmann, “Corruption: The Facts,” *Foreign Policy* 107 (1997).
  - Read pages 114-123
- Pranab Bardhan, “The Economist’s Approach to the Problem of Corruption,” *World Development* 34, 2 (2006).

### **Lecture 15: Politics and Corruption**

*Thursday, February 25*

- “Corruption in Latin America: Democracy to the Rescue?” *Economist*, March 14, 2015.
- James Scott, *Comparative Political Corruption* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972)
  - Read pages 21-34
- Matthew Stephenson, “Corruption and Democratic Institutions: A Review and Synthesis.” In *Greed, Corruption and the Modern State*, edited by Susan Rose-Ackerman and Paul Lagunes (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015).

## **III. SOLUTIONS**

### **Lecture 16: State Actions Against Corruption**

*Tuesday, March 2*

- Avinash Dixit. “Anti-Corruption Institutions: Some History and Theory.” In *Institutions, Governance and the Control of Corruption*, edited by Kaushik Basu and Tito Cordell (International Economic Association Series, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
- Claudio Ferraz and Frederico Finan. “Fighting Political Corruption: Evidence from Brazil.” In *Institutions, Governance and the Control of Corruption*, edited by Kaushik Basu and Tito Cordell (International Economic Association Series, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
- Fu Hualing, “Wielding the Sword: President Xi’s New Anti-Corruption Campaign.” In

*Greed, Corruption and the Modern State*, edited by Susan Rose-Ackerman and Paul Lagunes (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015).

### **Lecture 17: Civil Society Against Corruption**

*Thursday, March 4*

- “Web Sites Shine Light on Petty Bribery Worldwide,” *International New York Times*, March 6, 2012.
- Shaazka Beyerle, *Curtailing Corruption: People Power for Accountability and Justice* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014).
  - Read Chapter 4
- Yuen Yuen Ang, “Authoritarian Restraints on Online Activism Revisited: Why ‘I-Paid-A-Bribe’ Worked in India but Failed in China,” *Comparative Politics* 47, 1 (2014).

### **Lecture 18: International Actions Against Corruption**

*Tuesday, March 9*

- “Guatemala’s Anti-Corruption Fight Inspired Latin America. It May Be Shut Down.” *New York Times*, May 18, 2019.
- Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences and Reform* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
  - Read Chapter 10
- Casey Dunning et al., “Hating on the Hurdle: Reforming the Millennium Challenge Corporation’s Approach to Corruption,” Center for Global Development MCA Monitor (2014).
  - Read pages 1-11

### **Lecture 19: Wrap-Up and Review**

*Thursday, March 11*

**THURSDAY, MARCH 18: CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAMINATION (3-6 PM, LOCATION TBA)**